

REMARKS

Claims 18-20, 22, 26, 27, 29 and 31-34 are rejected; and claims 21, 23-25, 28 and 30 are objected to as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner considered that it is unclear how the claimed heating means covers the outer peripheral surface of the filtration unit without being in contact therewith.

Applicants respond as follows.

As shown in Fig. 8, the outer peripheral surface of the filtration unit 11 is covered with a heating apparatus 33 for heating the filtration unit 11 at a predetermined temperature such that the heating apparatus is not in contact with the filtration unit 11. For example, the subject embodiment employs a heating apparatus 33 formed of a hollow heating member 34 in which warm water is circulated to heat the filtration unit 11 (specification bridging pages 19-20).

That is, hot water circulating through heating member 34 heats the filtration unit 11 in a manner similar to a hot water radiator (natural convection), to prevent a decrease in fluidity of the volume-reduced gel-state polystyrene resin during filtration.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed heating means, which reads on at least Fig. 8, fully complies with 35 U.S.C. § 112 and withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 18, 22, 26, 27, 29 and 31-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 889,159 to Trump in view of U.S. Patent 1,845,893 to Sommermeyer.

Claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Trump and Sommermeyer, further in view of U.S. Patent 3,802,566 to Hata.

In response, claim 18 has been amended to incorporate therein the recitation of claims 19 and 21, to thereby obviate the foregoing rejections. Claims 19 and 21 have been canceled, and claims 20 and 23 have been amended to depend from claim 18.

Withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of claims 18, 20 and 22-34 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: January 27, 2010